Technology Plan
2003

Box Butte County
Information Technology Committee

Vision Statement: The Box Butte County Information Technology Committee strives to develop and support an educated populace equipped with the knowledge and infrastructure to take advantage of expanding technology to improve both the personal lives of the individual and the economic well-being of the community.

In support of our vision of the future of technology in Box Butte County, the members of the Committee have identified the following priorities for our communities:

1. **Education**

2. **Promoting E-Commerce**

3. **Infrastructure Development**

Action Plans

Education

Current E-Readiness Level: 1.5   Although our communities have sufficient infrastructure in place to allow for full and varied use of information technology, few residents utilize its full capacity. We plan to provide free and low cost educational opportunities to familiarize consumers with current IT resources and how to use them to the best advantage.

Target E-Readiness Level: 3

Strengths: A demonstrated desire to improve
The public recognizes the importance of education
Proactive City Council
Cooperative attitude of local vendors and consultants

Resources & Assets: Western Nebraska Community College
Chadron State College Extended Campus
Adult Community Education Program
Adult Basic Education Program
Alliance Public Schools
Local and Regional IT Professionals
Chamber of Commerce (provides business education opportunities)

Planned Action Steps:

1. Organize New Classes
    Information gathered from our survey pointed out the need for beginner level classes on many subjects. These will be offered on a flexible time schedule to fit into varied work schedules.

2. Advertise and Promote Current and New Class Offerings
    We will build public awareness of educational opportunities through a variety of advertising media.

3. Develop Mentoring Activities and Support
    We will work to organize a pool of IT professionals to act as mentors for businesses and individuals. Our new laptop will allow these individuals to take education and assistance directly to consumers to help them better understand the technology and its applications.

4. Find Innovative Approaches to Best Utilize Limited IT Resources
    Computer labs needed for training are limited in number and often unavailable. The Committee will research ways to use these resources during off-hours, as well as attempt to locate additional equipment and training sites.

5. Research Use of Cable TV Channel as a Delivery Method for Free Community Education
    The local cable television company has a local community access channel available for public use. The Committee will work to develop a series of free classes to be broadcast on this channel.

Promote E-Commerce

Current E-Readiness Level: 2   Some area businesses use IT effectively for sales and marketing, but many more could benefit from proper use of the available resources.

Target E-Readiness Level: 3

Strengths: Good local role models
Box Butte Development Corporation
Chamber of Commerce

Resources & Assets: Local and Regional IT Professionals
LB 840 funds

Planned Action Steps:

1. Providing Education
   Educating business owners is the first step to integrating e-commerce into the local business economy. In addition to basic level classes, the Committee is in the process of bringing in an experienced e-commerce instructor to give workshops.

2. Developing a mentoring program
   The Committee will recruit local e-commerce users to share their expertise. We plan to showcase these businesses and their methods in short workshops to encourage other business owners to integrate IT into their operations.

3. Advertising and Promoting Local Success Stories
   Through a variety of media the Committee will spotlight the successful use of IT in the area business communities.

4. Developing a Technology Committee Website
   The Committee will work to develop a website for the Box Butte County Information Technology Committee. This site will provide links to area businesses, information on educational opportunities and other topics related to IT. We plan to have it linked from sites at Box Butte Development, the Chamber of Commerce and others.

5. Showcasing Current E-Commerce Sites
   Through use of the website, the Committee will showcase current local e-commerce sites. We will provide articles about the successes, failures and challenges of establishing a business in e-commerce.

Infrastructure Development

Current E-Readiness Level: 3   The infrastructure in our area is currently very good, but the rate of progress in IT dictates that we constantly strive to keep pace. A current local challenge is to educate the public in the variety of IT resources available to them.

Target E-Readiness Level: 4

Strengths: Multiple Providers to Choose From
Support of Local, State and Federal Elected Officials

Resources & Assets: NITC

Regional Providers

Planned Action Steps:

1. Education
    There are multiple providers in the area, but our survey results indicated that consumers are not aware of their options. The Committee will work to provide information on all of the available providers, their services, prices, etc.

2. Increase Comfort Level With Technology
    A barrier to IT use is the fear of the unknown. Through the use of the laptop, our mentoring program, workshops and classes, we will provide access to the technology in an unthreatening, hands-on manner. We will work to familiarize consumers with the hardware, software and concepts needed to take full advantage of IT.

3. Lobbying Efforts
    The members of the Committee will continue to watch developing IT legislation. We will remain in close contact with our elected officials to ensure the voice of Western Nebraska is a part of future legislation influencing information technology.

4. Demonstrate and Circulate Laptop
    In addition to use in the mentoring and training programs, the laptop will be available for check-out and use by individual business owners. It is our goal to promote the use of this unit to encourage businesses to invest in their own IT equipment and raise their level of information age participation.

5. Research Equipment Recycling Programs
    The Committee will research the possibility of a computer recycling program to provide equipment to individuals who might otherwise be unable to afford it.